



Overweight? Why it may not be your fault

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Travellers' glee as judge halts closure of illegal site at 11th hour

FLASCO DOWN ON EVICTION FARM

By Paul Harris and Andrew Levy

IT may have been the travellers' last stand, but it was no one's finest hour.

In scenes bordering on farce, the eviction of Dale Farm began with an all-day stand-off and ended with yet another legal hitch in a local council's efforts to clear Europe's largest illegal site.

On one side were protesters and travellers insisting they shall not be moved.

On the other, bailiffs and a small platoon of blue-uniformed officials spouting health and safety concerns through a loudhailer that didn't work.

But this long-awaited first stage in the Battle of Basildon was abruptly halted yesterday when a judge sitting 50 miles away granted a last-gasp injunction to delay further action.

Now the operation to clear the site has been put on hold until at least the end of the week after Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart ruled at the High Court in London that the proposed measures 'may go further' than the terms of the enforcement notices.

Basildon Council was thrown into disarray last night as its lawyers scrambled to read through the injunction. Leader Tony Ball hurriedly left a television interview for an urgent briefing.

He didn't explain the ruling when he returned to give a brief statement an hour later but said he was 'extremely disappointed and frustrated' by the decision.

He added: 'The motion was put forward to the High Court without notice, which meant the judge only had one side of the story and therefore has given the council until Friday to go back to the High Court to make its argument.'

'I am absolutely clear that, in this issue



Celebration: Two travellers dance with delight at news of the injunction yesterday

£3m offer to Milly's family over hacking

MILLY Dowler's family are considering a £3million offer of compensation over the phone hacking scandal.

Negotiations with the publishers of the News of the World are said to be at an advanced stage.

The murdered 13-year-old's parents Bob and Sally and sister Gemma would receive £2million personal damages with a further £1million going to charity, paid by Rupert Murdoch from his own pocket.

The Dowlers' lawyers were said to be holding out for a total package of £3.5million, but publishers News International said an agreement is expected within days.

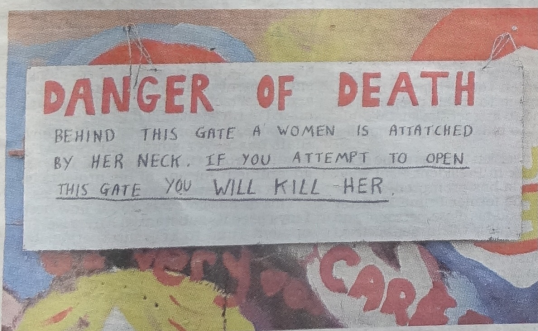
The figure is far more than the family could have expected if the case had gone to court, possibly reflecting Mr Murdoch's distress when he was told that Milly's phone had been hacked following her murder by Levi Bellfield. Criminal injuries compensation would have been a maximum £11,000.

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D-day's cancelled



On the ramparts: Protesting traveller women stand side by side at one of the gates to Dale Farm yesterday



Death threat: Just behind this warning sign one of the activists waits with a bicycle lock around her neck



Among them is a tubby Mancunian called Steve who tried to endear himself to his new comrades with daft impressions of a possum. When asked what he did for a day job, he said proudly: 'I'm a professional activist.'

Then there were the bright Left-wing students arguing passionately about

'Doing their dirty work'

their desire to bring down capitalism and 'replace it with something better'.

At times order was brought to the camp by self-imposed leaders - ardent feminists in their 40s.

The camp would not be complete without a celebrity. Step forward Johnny Marbles, the comedian who launched a foam pie attack on Rupert

Murdoch in July. This criminal act gave him cult status as he walked into Camp Constant - the activists' HQ - yesterday.

Sitting next to Mr Marbles - real name Jonathan May-Bowles - was his girlfriend, who admitted she had no interest in the issues behind the eviction. 'I'm here for the protest,' she said. 'I don't give a **** about the travellers.'

At least 20 of the 200 activists claimed they had come to Dale Farm to try to record evidence of brutality by the police or bailiffs. However, a 15-minute briefing by one of the 'legal team' dispelled the notion that this was a worthy venture.

As a human rights student handed out fluorescent yellow bibs with the words 'legal observer' on them, he told his team: 'You are not neutral. You are on the side of the protesters. You are here to photograph and bear witness to excessive behaviour by the

police and the bailiffs. You should not write down any criminal acts committed by the protesters. And if you take photos of the protesters committing illegal acts you should delete them so that they cannot be used in evidence against them.'

The anarchist operation is big. For weeks a dedicated kitchen team has been feeding a growing army three cooked meals a day.

All protesters, regardless of their beliefs, are fed generous ladles of vegan food from huge vats of food.

In the past two weeks the travellers have been happy to take a step back and let the seasoned protesters take over their fight.

As one insider put it: 'The travellers like getting others to do their dirty work, but they really can't believe their luck this time.'

No wonder travellers keep grinning ear to ear every time I walk past them.



Defiant: Traveller girls show their delight at the injunction